

REMARKS

Claims 1-14 are pending in the application. The status of the claims is as follows:

Claims 1-13 are allowed.

Claim 14 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,724,154 to Ito et al ("Ito"). However, claim 14 has been cancelled. Therefore, the rejection of claim 14 is now moot.

The acknowledgement, in the Office Action, of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d), and that the certified copy of the priority document has been received, is noted with appreciation.

To date, no Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review has been received. Applicant(s) respectfully request receipt of this document when it becomes available. Please note that the original drawings filed in the patent application are "formal" drawings.

Claim 8 has been amended to correct a grammatical error. This change is not necessitated by the prior art, is unrelated to the patentability of the invention over the prior art, and does not introduce any new matter.

CONCLUSION

Wherefore, in view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, this application is considered to be in condition for allowance, and an early reconsideration and a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

This Amendment does not increase the number of independent claims, does not increase the total number of claims, and does not present any multiple dependency claims. Accordingly, no fee based on the number or type of claims is currently due. However, if a

Application No. 09/675,026
Amendment dated August 24, 2004
Reply to Office Action of June 18, 2004

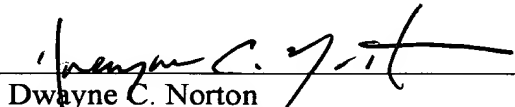
fee, other than the issue fee, is due, please charge this fee to Sidley Austin Brown & Wood LLP's Deposit Account No. 18-1260.

Any fee required by this document other than the issue fee, and not submitted herewith should be charged to Sidley Austin Brown & Wood LLP's Deposit Account No. 18-1260. Any refund should be credited to the same account.

If an extension of time is required to enable this document to be timely filed and there is no separate Petition for Extension of Time filed herewith, this document is to be construed as also constituting a Petition for Extension of Time Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) for a period of time sufficient to enable this document to be timely filed.

Any other fee required for such Petition for Extension of Time and any other fee required by this document pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17, other than the issue fee, and not submitted herewith should be charged to Sidley Austin Brown & Wood LLP's Deposit Account No. 18-1260. Any refund should be credited to the same account.

Respectfully submitted,

By: 
Dwayne C. Norton
Registration No. 48,435
Agent for Applicants

DCN/llb:bar
SIDLEY AUSTIN BROWN & WOOD LLP
717 N. Harwood, Suite 3400
Dallas, Texas 75201
Direct: (214) 981-3387
Main: (214) 981-3300
Facsimile: (214) 981-3400
August 24, 2004

DA1 304210v3